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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0867  
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RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 1775  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0505  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1914  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0177  
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY 9093  
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SUBJECT: ITALY: TOO SOON TO EXPAND EU SANCTIONS ON BURMA

REF: SECSTATE 155019

Classified By: A/Pol M/C Jonathan Cohen, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Poloff delivered reftel demarche to MFA Southeast Asia Office Director Alberto Vecchi November 14 and urged Italy to press for expanded EU sanctions against Burma. Poloff discussed USG efforts to promote dialogue between the regime and democratic and ethnic minority groups, stressed that the U.S. considers financial sanctions an important and effective means of applying pressure, and pointed out signs that U.S. sanctions are having an effect on the regime and its supporters.

¶2. (C) Vecchi agreed that coordination on sanctions was essential to making them effective, and that efforts like the November 16 DVC were useful tools for maintaining a unified approach, but said it seemed too early to toughen EU sanctions further, given that the results of UN Special Advisor for Burma Gambari's latest visit were not yet clear. Vecchi thought the regime's willingness to allow Aung San Suu Kyi to meet with her colleagues in the National League for Democracy (NLD) on November 9 was a good sign, and said we should allow some time to see the junta's next moves. Poloff countered that allowing her to meet with a few NLD members while under house arrest was a somewhat positive but entirely insufficient development.

¶3. (C) In the event that the Burmese junta remains unmoved by international pressure, Vecchi said he thought Italy would support further sanctions. In any case, he thought expanded sanctions would not be on the agenda of the November 19 GAERC, and that the next opportunity to consider such EU action would be in December.  
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